United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Cyrus Vance, Co-Chairman of International Conference on former Yugoslavia, announces this evening meeting with Serbian President Milosevic in Paris on Thursday; to return on Friday to New York for talks with Bosnian President Izetbegovic.

+ Secretary-General tells resumed session of First Committee that end of bipolarity has not diminished need for disarmament; calls for measures to reassure States that feel threatened in order to avoid "new arms race".

+ Melissa F. Wells of United States appointed as Under-Secretary-General of Administration and Management, effective 5 April.

+ Secretary-General welcomes signing of Afghan Peace Accord in Islamabad; expresses hope for establishment of Government and peace necessary for reconstruction of "devastated" country.

+ Violation of human rights is principal source of refugee phenomenon, Secretary-General tells round table on refugees; calls on States to draw up just and equitable procedures for granting of refugee status.

+ Fifth Committee considers appropriation of $140 million for United Nations Operation in Mozambique for period 15 October to 30 June 1993.

+ European Community tells Charter Committee that efforts of regional organizations should be coordinated with those of United Nations.

+ World Food Programme (WFP) provides emergency food aid to refugees fleeing civil unrest in Chad into neighbouring Central African Republic.

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For information media--not an official record

Cyrus Vance, Co-Chairman of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, told correspondents this evening that he would be meeting with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Paris on Thursday, 11 March, at Mr. Vance's request and at the invitation of French President François Mitterrand.

"We think the time has come to get more pressure put on the Serbs to move", said Mr. Vance shortly after briefing members of the Security Council. He pointed out that the Croatian side had moved on all three components of the overall peace agreement, while the Muslims had agreed to two of them.

Mr. Vance confirmed that he would return to New York on Friday, 12 March, to hold further talks with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic at Headquarters.

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Measures to reassure States which feel that their security is threatened were necessary if "a new spiral of the arms race" was to be avoided, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today told the General Assembly's First Committee (Political and Security). He addressed the Committee as it reconvened to reassess the existing multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery and consider his report entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era".

The end of bipolarity had not diminished the need for disarmament, Secretary-General said. The number of armed conflicts around the world was increasing and the process of arms limitation and disarmament must embrace both the acquisition and the use of weapons.

He warned that there was a growing concern over the dangers of nuclear proliferation. Tensions were also escalating in regions where large numbers of weapons had been left over from the cold war. The elimination of such weapons was a major part of the work of the United Nations in post-conflict peace-building in such countries as Cambodia and Somalia, the Secretary-General said.

Among the areas demanding priority attention from the United Nations were continuing negotiations on multilateral and bilateral agreements and treaties on disarmament; the involvement of regional organizations in confidence-building; mechanism to monitor trends in military procurement and spending; and implementation of a more integrated approach to disarmament.

The Secretary-General added that he was currently considering a proposal to relocate units of the Office for Disarmament to Geneva as a means to improve the efficiency of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Melissa F. Wells of the United States as Under-Secretary-General of Administration and Management, effective 5 April. She will be replacing Richard Thornburgh.

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Mrs. Wells has been the Ambassador of the United States to a number of African States, including Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde.

From 1979 to 1981, she served the United Nations as Special Representative to the Secretary-General for Relief Operations in Europe.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today welcomed the signing of the Afghan Peace Accord in Islamabad on Sunday, 7 March, and expressed the hope that it would pave the way for the establishment of a representative government and ensure peace necessary for the reconstruction of the "devastated" country.

In a statement issued by his Spokesman, he further expressed the hope that the cease-fire would improve the security situation and permit the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

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The violation of human rights was the principal source of the refugee phenomenon, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today told the opening of a two-day round table on the question of refugees at Headquarters. Besides political reasons, he said, there were also economic and social causes, linked with poverty, malnutrition and underdevelopment, that propelled individuals to cross the borders of their country of origin.

The Secretary-General recalled that there were currently some 18 million refugees worldwide; moreover, he said, there were more than 24 million persons displaced within their own countries.

Emphasizing that the concept of solidarity should concern States first of all, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said that those States who had not done so must be persuaded to accede to the international conventions and all other States must be encouraged to comply with the conventions more rigorously. The General Assembly had included "the flow of refugees" among the causes of concern which may warrant humanitarian emergency assistance, he added.

He pointed out that States must be persuaded to refrain from taking steps which may jeopardize the very principle of asylum, particularly by sending back or expelling refugees or those seeking asylum. The refugee question was one of the spheres of action of preventive diplomacy to which he was particularly dedicated, recalled Mr. Boutros-Ghali. Furthermore, he added, the use of initiatives aimed at averting the causes that produced the flows of refugees must be increased.

He stressed that the world Organization must bear in mind that refugees should be able to benefit from the best possible conditions for repatriation or, failing that, the best possible conditions for resettlement. Solidarity also concerned the non-governmental organizations which were dedicated to the advancement of the individual and respect for human rights, he added.

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The round table on refugees is being held under the auspices of the Observer Mission of the Holy See and the Path to Peace Foundation.

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A lump sum of $140 million for the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) would be allocated by the General Assembly to cover the period from 15 October 1992 to 30 June 1993, according to a recommendation by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The recommendation differs from that of the Secretary-General, which would appropriate some $264 million for the period from 15 October 1992 to 31 October 1993.

The new proposal represents an ad hoc arrangement, in view of expected revisions in the timetable of the operational plan. It also takes into account changes in the implementation of aspects of the Mozambique General Peace Agreement, signed last October between the Government and the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (RENAMO).

At a meeting of the Fifth Committee, which has resumed its session to consider the proposal, the representative of Mozambique, Pedro Commissario Afonso, appealed for the operation's full and immediate deployment. Although the cease-fire had been holding for almost six months without a meaningful United Nations field presence, he said, the spirit of goodwill should not now be undermined by inaction on the part of the international community.

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The efforts of regional organizations should be coordinated with those of the United Nations, the representative of Denmark told the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization yesterday.

Speaking on behalf of the 12-member States of the European Community, Bent Haakonsen, the Danish Permanent Representative to the United Nations, said that such cooperation should respond to threats to international peace and security without rigid formulations. He added that flexibility was needed to adapt to the particular needs of each situation.

The representative of Japan, Hidehiko Hamada, told the Committee that while the recent successes of the United Nations had been remarkable, it was urgent that the way in which the Organization functioned be improved. Japan had repeatedly stated that serious consideration should be given to the membership and composition of the Security Council. It was important that the Charter Committee engage in a frank exchange of views.

The representative of China, Zhang Kening, pointed out that the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of world peace and security touched upon State sovereignty and was constrained by Charter provisions and by the statutes of those organizations. Emphasis should be placed on coordination between regional bodies and the Council, he suggested.

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The representative of the United Kingdom, Michael Wood, said the Security Council was acting promptly and any review of its membership should not be allowed to undermine its efforts. Regarding the problems of third States affected by Security Council sanctions, there was no "magic solution" and a "trust fund" was not the answer, he said.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that it will provide 510 metric tons of emergency relief food to 10,000 refugees who have fled civil unrest in Chad into neighbouring Central African Republic. The refugees, including 3,000 children, will receive enough food aid to cover their needs for three months.

Thousands of Chadians, mainly from Gore district, fled at the end of January into neighboring Central African Republic in search of a safe haven. The WFP hopes the situation in Chad will stabilize in the next three months to allow repatriation of the refugees.

Meanwhile, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Government of the Central African Republic are rehabilitating a camp where all the refugees will be transferred. The site offers agricultural land which can be cultivated by the refugees and which provides a basic infrastructure.

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